

Nursing students reaching out to communities

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Annually the nursing students visit different communities to conduct a community study, which culminates in the profiling of the communities being studied. During these visits, students employ the look, listen and learn techniques to gain insight into the problems the chosen communities are faced with. Students also work together with local clinics, churches and non-governmental organisations already operating in the area. They work closely with the local clinic to compile the epidemiological profile of the community. Later during the year, the same students are required to host an intervention day as one way of empowering the communities studied.

On 14 June 2019, the Second Year Bachelor of Nursing Students at the University of KwaZulu-Natal reached out to the community of Point in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa for a community intervention.

On this day, they targeted the homeless people in the Point area working together with the local church. Students partnered with 'Food for life', a local meals on wheels service which provides a hot meal to homeless individuals and families. The programme started with a prayer by one of the students followed by education on nutrition. The homeless people were educated on the role played by nutrition in our health and well-being. They were taught about different food groups and the importance of a well-balanced diet. The following topics were covered on the day: substance abuse; hygiene; demonstration of hand washing; short play on hygiene and nutrition and education on menstruation.

The theme of the day was **"Promoting hygiene and good nutrition"**.

The session was very well attended by the homeless community of Point. They were educated on personal hygiene and the importance of washing hands regularly as hands can be vehicles of transmitting infections if not washed frequently.



Nursing students preparing to demonstrate hand washing to the homeless people



Below, the nursing students are preparing pre-packed cooked meals for distribution to the homeless





Students collaborating with the local church on serving the homeless community



Nursing lecturers supporting students during their intervention day

Conclusion

Preventive and promotive health form the basis of health care. It is crucial that we prepare community health nurses very early in their training to empower communities to prevent illnesses and promote healthy practices. This will

in turn curb the disease burden and result in fewer hospital admissions. Let us prevent the preventable diseases in the communities to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal 3 and help our citizens to live healthy lives.